

The Journal of SCIENCE-FICTION

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Fall 1951

H. L. GOLD

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COVER by David Stone

Sketch of H. L. Gold, editor of Galaxy Science Fiction

Ax drawing by Lester Fried

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EDITORIAL

The Journal of Science Fiction is intended as a service to science fiction and those interested in it. In the past two years, the field has grown swiftly. Perhaps in some ways too swiftly. The JSF will seek through intelligent and mature articles to analyze the many ramifications of present day science fiction. It does not consider such admirable publications as Science Fiction News Letter, Fantasy Times, Rhodomagnetic Digest, Fantasy Advertiser, Slant, Operation Fantast, Etc., as competitors but rather as brothers in arms in spreading the understanding and enjoyment of science fiction.

The JSF does not believe in certain things, among which are fan fiction, excessive artwork, poetry, and feuds. If a story is good, it belongs in the professional magazines. If it is bad, why read it? Good artwork, if available, will appear, but the amount will be kept within reason. The JSF is not and will never be a comic book. Poetry appeals to rather few people in almost any group (except poets) and the space it would require is needed for more pressing matters. Feuds are a waste of time and effort. The JSF will not allow its pages to become the battleground of dubious causes. However the readers should not infer that controversial material will be excluded. In fact, it will be welcomed if it serves a useful and intelligent purpose.

The JSF hopes to serve as the vanguard of Chicago science fiction. Many of the plans for the JSF originated with members of the University of Chicago Science Fiction Club, which was started early in 1950 and is now under the leadership of Charles Freudenthal since the departure of its first president, Ray Solomonoff. At the monthly meetings have been such notables as Fritz Leiber, E. E. Smith, Mel Korshak, Wayne Proell, etc. This marks the first active Chicago organization to appear for far too many years.

Future editorials will deal with trends in science fiction and will also function as a general survey of events between issues. Science fiction is altered by events in our society and in its own small but significant way helps to shape our society. Too little attention has been given to the influence of science fiction in present day culture. It is unfortunate that most people consider science fiction, the special property of the comic and pulp magazines. As the field expands even further into the cinema, radio, television, etc., it will be even more important to understand the effects of this "literature of the imagination."

For the lead article next issue, we have the long "An Amazing Quarter Century" by Edward Wood which surveys Amazing Stories year by year from 1926 to 1951. While neither definitive nor exhaustive in treatment, it does go into considerable detail. There will be other articles of a varied nature.

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THE *Golden Galaxy*

MARTIN GARDNER



While John Campbell has been increasingly preoccupied with trying to remember his experiences as an embryo, H. L. Gold, editor of *Galaxy*, has been increasingly concerned with ways to improve the quality of his lively, attractive magazine. Recently he wrote a story and submitted it to himself. After several friends read the manuscript and concluded it was not quite up to *Galaxy*'s high standards, he promptly handed himself a rejection slip. The incident illustrates precisely the ruthlessness with which Gold is winnowing his manuscripts.

Not that Gold is incapable of writing top-notch fantasy fiction. His book-length "None But Lucifer", published in *Unknown*, has long been a classic of its kind, and many of his excellent shorter stories have found their way into anthologies. But at the moment Gold's activities are dominated by one single objective -- to raise the quality of science-fiction available on the American newstand. So far, he has had spectacular success.

Horace/Leonard Gold was born in 1914 in Montreal, Canada. His father, a Polish-born tailor and furrier, moved from Canada to the Bronx when Horace was two years old. Seven years later the family shifted to Providence, R.I. Some difficulty with High School Latin set him back half a year, but apparently he learned it well

enough to struggle later through the poems of Catullus, and read those forbidden sections of anthropology texts that are printed in Latin.

As far as Gold can recall, *The Wizard of Oz* was his first introduction to fantasy. It was soon followed by Burroughs' Mars books, and the second year of *Amazing Stories*. "I bought very few copies of *Amazing*," he admits. "In those days what kid had two bits?" A book that made an enormous impression on him at the time was an early interplanetary by Maurice Le Blanc called *The Three Eyes*. At the age of 13 he tried to repeat one of John Carter's mystical devices (described in a Burroughs book) for getting to Mars. "I must have done something wrong," Gold said, with an understatement characteristic of his sly sense of humor. "It didn't work."

After he finished high school in Queens, in 1932, the family's lack of funds made hopes of college impossible. "In fact," said Gold, "if it hadn't been for father's shrewdness in playing the horses, I doubt if we'd have eaten at all."

At the age of 19 Gold called on T. O'Connor Sloane, then 82 and the editor of *Amazing*. He was astonished when Sloane declared his manuscript "too good for *Amazing*" and insisted on carrying it upstairs to the office

of the Delineator. "The story came back to me next week," Gold said wistfully, adding that he was not astonished when a few months later the Delineator went bankrupt.

Gold's first sale was to an obscure humor magazine called Clown. Instead of a check, he asked for an equivalent supply of cigarettes, the obtaining of which, he claims, was then the biggest problem in his life. The story was not a fantasy, and he hasn't the slightest recollection of what it was about. "My time track may be a little wobbly," Gold said at this point, his brown eyes twinkling. "It's buried under roughly 10,000,000 published words --- only about 250,000 of which are fantasy or science-fiction."

In 1934, at the age of 20, he sold his first science-fiction tale. It was a novelette called "Inflexure" ("Something about parallel worlds") and appeared in Astounding with the by-line of Clyde Crane Campbell. He was working as a bus-boy when the check for \$195 arrived. "I had just been canned," he said. "I went back to the restaurant and gave the boss explicit directions on the proper location of the job."

Flushed with success, Gold promptly moved into Greenwich Village, grew a black Van Dyke beard, and pretended to be 26, not realizing, he says, that most of the science-fiction writers at that time were about the same age as he. More sales to Astounding followed, under the Campbell pseudonym, then he began trying to crack the slicks under the name of Julian Gray. No success. He changed the spelling to Grey. Still no luck. Finally he combined the two to form Julian Graey, and "By God," he exclaimed in that deep, rich voice of his that fascinates everyone who meets him first (as I did) via telephone, "Mademoiselle took a story!" It was his first sale to a slick magazine and the last under

that eye-dazing triphthong. The magic went out of it with a single bolt.

The years 1935 to 1938 were lean depression years. Unable to earn a living writing, Gold moved about from one job to another. He sold shoes, he was an apprentice upholsterer, a floor scraper, a door-to-door radio salesman. For a time he was even paid by life guards at Rockaway Beach to fake drowning episodes at various points along the shore; this prevented the city from firing guards in areas where the safety record was too good. An excellent swimmer, Gold would go into his act, let himself be dragged ashore for artificial respiration, then after recovering, the guards would register him under a phony name. "It paid very badly," Gold recalled with a shudder. "It was no way to make a living. I quit when one guard laid his head open on his own catamaran and I had to pull him in."

In 1938 he began selling to Astounding again -- this time under his own name. "A Matter of Form" and "Problem in Murder" were two tales from this period, both later anthologized. When Unknown appeared, he sold them a number of short stories, of which the best known are "Day Off" "Warm Dark Places," and "Trouble With Water." The latter yarn -- about a man named Greenberg who offends a water gnome and lives for weeks under a curse which prevents him from touching water -- used his father as a model for the protagonist. It is widely considered Gold's most delightful short fantasy.

It was in Unknown that the famous "None But Lucifer" was printed. G. B. Shaw once remarked that if the planets are inhabited, Earth must be their hell; and Arnold Bennett had written in his journal that "of all the inhabitants of the Inferno, none but Lucifer knows that hell is hell. Gold combined these two concepts into a magnificent picture of Earth as a place where

attempts to seek happiness lead only to final frustration, because this is where mankind is being punished for sins committed in previous lives on another world. The hero, a man named Hale, discovers Lucifer managing earthly affairs with diabolical efficiency under the guise of a Babbitt-like businessman named Johnson. By threatening to reveal Johnson's secret, Hale manages to obtain partnership with him only to discover that Lucifer....but I'd better not spoil the ending for you, in case you haven't yet read this ingenious tale. The story reflects, incidentally, much of the bitterness of Gold's early struggles as a writer.

Although Sprague de Camp's name appeared with Gold's on the Lucifer work, it was only because John Campbell, editor of Unknown, had suggested that the story be turned over to Sprague for revision. De Camp cut the story and added three new chapters. Gold objected to the addition, but Campbell overruled. A subsequent agreement with de Camp has given Gold the sole by-line when the novel is reprinted, as it should be, in hard covers.

After Unknown folded, Gold sold a couple of stories to Thrilling Wonder, but economic necessity pushed him into editorial jobs. After working a while for the Standard chain, he joined the staff of Magazine House where he created two true detective magazines. "I wrote approximately a million words of fact detective cases," he sighed, "until I got bored with rape."

After writing and editing comics for a time, he formed a partnership with writer Ken Crossen. Together they worked on such books as Superman and Batman, on numerous slick pieces and pulp stories, and radio dramatic scripts for Mystery Theatre and the Kate Smith hour. Then he and Crossen ventured into the publishing field, where they set up to produce comic books and mystery reprints. The company smashed up while Gold was overseas during the war.

The draft took Gold in 1944 for a service of two years. As a combat engineer he saw action in the Philippines, and when the war ended he was transferred for a short time to Armed Forces Radio as chief script writer for the West Pacific network. He returned from service with a fast receding hair line and the right to join the Disabled American Veterans, but retaining his facial resemblance to movie star Robert Young, and his vocal resemblance to an opera baritone. He began to write comics once more, occasional radio shows, pulps and slicks.

Last year, World Editions was looking for new ventures and Gold submitted the plans for Galaxy. Luckily for science-fiction, his meticulously detailed presentation was accepted and he was hired to do the editing.

Everyone knows what happened after that. Galaxy, with the Golden touch on every issue became the big science-fiction news of the year. Each number was better than the one before. Already more than fifty percent of the stories in the first four issues have been scheduled for book publication!

Galaxy's astonishing reception can be attributed in part to Gold's preference for quality writing (his ad on the back cover of the first number, comparing the average "space opera" with a western story, hit the nail squarely on the head), and in part to the magazine's high rates and liberal policy on reprint rights. Galaxy buys only first publication rights, all others being retained by the author.

Campbell's recent refusal to release Hal Clement's "Needle" for paperback publication (in Galaxy Science-Fiction Novels) may indicate how seriously he feels Galaxy is cutting into his circulation and story supply. But the result of Astounding's astounding "Needle" policy has only been to needle more and more top writers into sending manuscripts first to Galaxy.



Trying to find quality in the science-fiction field is a little like digging for gold in a played out mine; it's there but the time, trouble, and effort in mining it often doesn't pay. With the exception of an occasional novel, quality is best represented by some of the better-edited anthologies, notably those of August Derleth, Groff Conklin and the yearly selections by Everett Bleiler and T. E. Dikty.

The Best Science-Fiction Stories: 1950 has just as fine a selection of stories as the 1949 edition, an extraordinarily well received anthology with which Frederick Fell, Inc. launched their---somewhat mediocre---science-fiction library last year. Granting that the editors operate under something of a handicap---they must restrict their selections to stories published the preceding year---they still have done a remarkable job.

Represented in this volume are Will Jenkins with "Doomsday Deferred", an ant-menace story that is tops of its type; Sturgeon's "The Huckle is a Happy Beast", the first of the alien-animal stories in Anthony Boucher's magazine, and we wish it had been the last since subsequent imitations have been nauseatingly cute; "Eternity Lost" by Clifford Simak, concerning a politician's attempt to buy immortality, our own favorite and one of the best stories that Simak has ever done; "Five Years in the Marmalade" by Robert Krepps, an odd story with an odd title that really hit us where we live, a tale that we very likely would have missed in magazine form; "Opening Doors" by Wilmar Shiras, a sequel to her popular "In Hiding"; "Dwellers in Silence" by Ray Bradbury, a story about one of the few remaining men on Mars who made a family of robots to replace his own family that had died in a plague; "Refuge for Tonight" by Robert Moore Williams, a United States-over-run-by-the-enemy type of yarn from Blue Book with an Adam and Eve ending; "The Man" by Bradbury again, a story with a religious angle to it which was handled very well; and Henry Kuttner's "Private Eye", a Padgett story from Astounding. The remaining stories in the volume are "Easter Eggs" by Robert Spencer Carr, "The Life Work of Professor Muntz" by Murray Leinster, "Mouse" by Fredric Brown, and "Flaw" by John D. MacDonald.

Some reviewers have carped about the double inclusion of Jenkins and Bradbury. A case might logically be made for Will Jenkins but certainly it would be difficult to lodge a complaint against two stories by Bradbury, who ranks as one of the foremost short story writers in America today. When Bradbury is good---and the two stories by him are very good---he is superb, and it is difficult to think of any story published during 1949 that we would substitute for either one of his. (In all frankness, we might also add that when Bradbury is bad, he is enough to drive this reviewer into dropping a magazine completely. "Rocket Summer", published in Planet Stories some time ago, was enough to make us give up browsing through that magazine for well over a year).

One danger that the editors run is the unavoidable use of the word "Best" in the title. It's a challenge to every science-fiction reader and reviewer to land on the editors' necks when their own favorite story isn't included. However, the stories in this volume rate very highly in entertainment and literary value and we think the editors have done very well indeed in picking some of the best of the year. The stories mentioned stand head, shoulders, torso, and ankles above the average that saw print in the magazines.

An innovation in this year's volume is a short profile of each author in the back of the book.

Where DO I Get My Ideas?

by RAY BRADBURY

Now that five long years of work on The Martian Chronicles are over and done, it is interesting, to me at least, to look back and see where the sources of my inspiration and material lay. It is startling to discover that a good part of one's life has been spent cheek-by-jowl with certain elements of fantasy and science. I was raised on the OZ books, on Edgar Allan Poe read to me by candlelight, on Hawthorne, and Irving intoned on October evenings, and on Tarzan and Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon. I still have thousands of Buck Rogers comic strips put away from those days when I was nine, ten, and eleven and collecting was my great passion. Then, when I was 12 I received (1) a rabbit from Blackstone, the magician, (2) a toy typewriter. Thereupon I wrote my first, illustrated, short novel, and became a magician performing at Oddfellow Banquets, with a moustache that fell off in the middle of my performance. I began reading Amazing Stories and all the other miraculous scientific pulps. Then, when I was fifteen, I started on Hemingway and Steinbeck and Sinclair Lewis, and dreamed that one day I would appear in the O'Brien collection of Best American Short Stories. The years went by, I worked my way up through the pulps to The New Yorker and Harper's, and then in looking back I began to put the whole pattern together. I thought to myself, I was a magician, and there is something of the magician in every writer, flourishing his effects and making his miracles, and I collected Buck Rogers and listened to Poe and loved Steinbeck and Sherwood Anderson and all the rest. Out of this melange, though, what could one save and shape? And then I began to think that there had been too many science-fiction books written, in hasty first drafts, with no emphasis on the human equation, with too many rocket guns and bug-eyed monsters, and I knew that I wanted to write a book that would use Buck Rogers perhaps as a springboard and follow along the paths of those writers I really admired, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Steinbeck, Mr. Hemingway, but not lean on them, no, just use them as guide-lights along the way. And so, taking the people from my home town, Waukegan, Illinois, my aunts and my uncles and cousins who had been raised in a green land, I parceled them into rockets and sent them off to Mars, not to bang at each other with childish pistols, or run from green, scaly beasts with sixteen heads, but to live, to build homes, to be lonely. And I knew that the essence of my book must be loneliness, for who among us would not be lonely 60-million miles from home with everything, our youths, our towns, our countries, our planet hidden in space, perhaps never to be seen again. I decided that my book would be not a looking crystal into the future, but simply a mirror in which each human Earthman would find his own image reflected. I have tried to do a book about you and me and the next fellow going away to another planet and being afraid and surprised and happy and then afraid again of the things that happen there. And if you ask me where I get my ideas then I will have to say I was raised on Poe and Hawthorne and Waukegan and Hemingway and Amazing Stories and OZ and, well, if you start at the beginning of this article and read it all over again, I think you'll really see where I get my ideas.



the case against BRADBURY

by EDWARD WOOD

The long lean years of Mr. Ray Bradbury's writing career have now brought forth a writer who is now reaping vast amounts of uncritical and generally unwarranted praise. "White Hope of Fantasy", "Best Writer of the Year", etc., are just a few superlatives used when Bradbury becomes the topic of conversation.

Bradbury has creative gifts. If this were not so, it would be needless to write about him. It is the aspiring, ardent writer who molds his ability and talents into literary efforts that outlive the passing moment, that needs and deserves critical attention, rather than the common untalented hack whose work is soon forgotten. In too many cases, success can be more dangerous than "seeming failure." It subverts the creative drive into sterile overproduction. The temptation to milk the waiting market with facsimiles, perhaps unconsciously disguised as "periods" or "phases" of a writing career is always present. Mr. Bradbury escaped from his Martian stage but not before many readers had become bored with his saying the same thing over and over again in his peculiar similar-different style. He said it well but too often.

The typical Bradbury story is well-written, over-sentimental, sometimes trivial, filled with the striking phraseology and "atmospheric detail"-which in Bradbury's own words, "he lovingly likes to linger over." Intense nostalgia is used to create moods of severe melancholia. Pre-occupied with death, destruction, destiny, too many of his stories become a tour de force of mood. Others read like exercises in stream of consciousness technique. There is a lack of proportion about his work. He is highly readable, yet vague and incomplete, he obeys yet refutes in an almost pseudo-subtle fashion of his own, the favorite theme of the writers' journals, viz: set-up, knock-down, resolution, and conclusion, with plenty of reader identification tossed in. He conceals this basic precept with little more than a puzzlingly unique atmosphere.

One finds little humor in Bradbury's writings. This takes the form of iconoclastic irony rather than the spoofing type found in other writers. The amount of science present in his stories is infinitesimal; nor, to be sure, does he claim to write 'science'-fiction. His forte is the anti-materialistic, anti-scientific humanism which has been so much more capably handled by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World and the late George Orwell in the rather over-rated Nineteen Eighty-Four. Bradbury's first two books, Dark Carnival and The Martian Chronicles can only super-

ficially be compared to them. The reader is confronted with a melange of fragments extending from the avant-garde to Hemingway realism with harsh overtones of American regionalism. The recent appearance of The Illustrated Man only serves to reinforce these statements.

Let us now deal in detail with a few of what have been considered Bradbury's better stories.

"And the Moon Be Still As Bright" is essentially a mundane situation given a Martian setting only for the benefit of science-fiction. Spender, an obviously psychopathic young man, is a member of an Earth expedition on Mars who attempts to murder his companions. His reason is that they do not share his attitude toward the artifacts of the dead Martians, who have been destroyed by smallpox brought by previous expeditions.

Many readers jumped to the conclusion that the story was supposed to show the "bestiality of man." Then why the obviously sympathetic characters of Cherokee, an Indian, and Captain Wilder, the head of the expedition, and of course, Spender? No explicit explanation is given for Spender's actions. The reader is brought in on Spender's emotional spiral at its climax without the necessary background. Compare this situation with Huxley's Brave New World where Mr. Savage, raised in a definite culture pattern, confronted with one that refuted his ideals, commits suicide, thus fulfilling a logical sequence of events. To be sure, Spender is supposed to be a decent and sensitive idealist. Why is left for the reader to determine. It does not stretch the imagination to conceive of an archeological expedition on Earth, with exactly the same denouement. Why does Spender commit the crimes? Supposedly to preserve dead monuments. To the dead, it is rather academic to protect graveyards. Again, why the rage against the pseudo brute, Parkhill, a rather childish person who reacts toward Martian culture and relics, the same way a young baby reacts to a simple hammer and complicated watch? Parkhill is logical and understandable for he exists in a pragmatic culture in which dead cities et al, are useless and the only criterion of importance is usefulness.

"Forever and the Earth" concerns the bringing of Thomas Wolfe into the future world of 2257 A.D. in order that he may write of that time in a suitable (to Bradbury) manner. Apparently, there is a lack of suitable literary talent in the future. The story stands or falls, on its ability to portray the character of Thomas Wolfe realistically. In certain vital respects Bradbury fails to do this. To mention Wolfe without the tireless E. M. Perkins-who, with inhuman labor, carved and hacked Wolfe's millions of words into coherence -verges on literary heresy. The word-intoxicated Wolfe wrote intensely autobiographical novels of loose construction, containing many beautiful passages of lyrical prose. He could write only of himself or of things he knew extremely well. To ask him to write of things "outside of his milieu" would have been useless. Even when required to write short stories, he could only submit portions of his splendid though over long novels. To write of Wolfe in a fictional manner surely implies the "whole" Wolfe, good and bad, not merely the desirable features.

In "Way in the Middle of the Air", the (American) negroes leave for Mars via rocket ships. If they had left for Liberia via steamship, it would show the mundane Bradbury creaking at the seams, for such a proposal was actually suggested some decades ago.

While the South has remained in an unfortunate quiescence for the past nine decades, that is still insufficient reason for placing the South of 1910-50 in June 2003. Bradbury seemingly suffers from these erratic chronological lapses everytime he wishes to make a point.

The coming world of "The Fireman" in which people found reading or keeping books are burned (with their books) to death as violators of the public morality, serves to allow another of Bradbury's "soul-sick" people a chance to remonstrate against the world. Bradbury postulates the rather unoriginal solution that the books be memorized ala minstrel fashion in order that the great literary masterpieces can be preserved. Perhaps the temptation to moralize was too great for him, thus indicating a new writing phase, for in the past he has resisted the opportunity to solve situations. It is to be hoped that Bradbury has a hard head. Stone walls have a notorious lack of mobility. Message literature, even by a master craftsman such as Bradbury, may have its place but it usually appeals only to those who don't need it.

The libraries of Alexandria were burned, and with them the greater portion of the written works of antiquity. It has never been demonstrated that more was lost than gained by the occurrence: the world still goes on in the ever-same pattern of existence. Since the invention of printing, so many books have been printed that only a small portion can be read by the intelligent person in one lifetime. A better point can be made for uncluttering the library shelves than for continuing the present deluge of drivel.

It is possible to list a few deficiencies in Bradbury's work:

Motivation- Bradbury forces his characters into situations in an arbitrary manner. He does not give insight into the minds of his characters. Over-enthused in describing his creations, he forgets to allow the reader to feel superior or inferior or inside or outside of them. His stories, thus are pure description, brilliant, witty perhaps, but still only description.

Improbability- Bradbury has a great tendency to mix his chronological episodes without sufficient or satisfactory warning to the reader. To cite an example, in "The Third Expedition" (formerly "Mars is Heaven") which supposedly takes place in April 2000, the members of this expedition apparently remember incidents which could only have occurred circa 1915-1925. Perhaps they were intended to be octogenarian or nonagenarian. It is, by and large, not a crucial point, but it can spoil the effect which Bradbury so painstakingly builds up.

Theatricalness- When the reader is able to see a literary prop as a prop than the writer has failed to some extent in achieving the catharsis of escaping from reality. The marionette strings show. He wearies the reader by continually clipping lines too short, using sentences too expressive, creating effects too forced, and belaboring his point. Considering the time and effort Bradbury spends on his work, it is strange that he so many times uses techniques not apropos to the situation. Mood is not everything.

Triviality- Bradbury to date has been lacking in that timeless humanity and understanding that makes for enduring literature. He re-

lies so much on the reader to fill in the background that his stories will be completely unintelligible to people not born around 1920-1940. Note the amount of detail good historical novels must have in order to be understandable. By describing instead of analyzing emotions, Bradbury becomes irrepressibly nostalgic and hopelessly superficial. It is vital that he concentrate more on cause and less on effect.

There is hope for Bradbury, if he can achieve a firmer writing discipline before his present dazzling success overwhelms him. He may even attain some measure of lasting fame. So far, he has written some clever, talented, and at times even ingenious stories.

Only time will judge his work. It will be the test of our opinions regarding his status. Let us hope that he will become an increasingly substantial bulwark of fantasy fiction. Some day he may even write some science fiction.



R. Bloch
&
F. Leiber

Hornbook for the Atomic Age

A is for Atoms, those cute little things
B for the bomb that oblivion brings
C for the Calm that comes in its wake
D is for Doomsday which shortly shall break
E for Eternity, quite a long time
F's for the Future, the theme of this rhyme
G is for Gun; a weapon outmoded
H--Hiroshima, a city exploded
I is for Irony, hardly an element
J--Jeremiah, predicting all hell, he meant
K is the symbol of sweet Kingdom Come
L for the Learning that's making things hum
M for the Masters of Unholy Science
N for the Neutron that aids in alliance
O is for "Ouch!"--a most popular cry
P for Plutonium--blows you sky high
Q is for Quantum, a sort of a theory
R--its Results, which no one dare query
S for the Science which brings the new day
T is for Trouble that's now on its way
U for Uranium-235
V--the next Victory, with no one alive
W is Woe, in accents sabbatical
X is a symbol that's quite mathematical
Y is for You, who will soon blow away
And Z for the Zeal that now hastens the day

Cautiously peered Oom over the rim of the Milky Way and focused his upper eye on an atomic cloud. As it mushroomed slowly from the surface of the earth, tears dripped from the upper eye of Oom.

But a little lower than the Legnas had Oom created man. Male and female, in an image somewhat like his own, created he them. Yet ever and again had they turned the power of reason upon themselves, and the history of their race had been one of endless discord.

And Oom knew that when the atomic clouds had cleared, and bacterial plagues had spent their fury, the race of man would yet live on. After war's exhaustion would come rest and returning strength, new cities and new dreams, new loves and hates, and again the crafty planning of new wars. So might things continue until the end of space-time.

Oom wearied of man's imperfection. Sighing, lightly he touched the earth with the tip of his left big toe.

And on the earth came a mighty quaking. Lightning and thunder raged, winds blew, mountains rent asunder. Waters churned above the continents. When silence came at last, and the sea slipped back into the hollows, no living thing remained.

Throughout the cosmos other planets whirled quietly about other suns, and on each had Oom caused divers manners of souls to grow. And on each had been ceaseless bitterness and strife. One by one, gently were they touched by a toe of Oom, until the glowing suns harbored only the weaving bodies of dead worlds.

Like intricate jewelled clockwork the universe ran on. And of this clockwork Oom greatly wearied. Softly he breathed on the glittering spheres and the lights of the suns went out and a vast Darkness brooded over the deep.

In the courts of Oom many laughed at the coming of the Darkness; but others did not laugh,

OOM
by

Martin Gardner

regretting the passing of the suns. Over the justice of Oom's indignation a great quarreling arose among the Legnas, and the sound of their quarreling reached the lower ear of Oom.

Then turned Oom and fiercely looked upon the Legnas. And when they beheld his countenance they drew back in terror, their wings trailing. Gently did Oom blow his breath upon them....

And as Oom walked the empty corridors, brooding darkly on the failures of his handiwork, a great loneliness came upon him. Within him a portion of himself spoke, saying:

"Thou hast done a foolish thing. Eternity is long and Thou shalt weary of thyself."

And it angered Oom that his soul be thus divided; that in him should be this restlessness and imperfection. Even of himself Oom wearied. Raising high his middle arm into the Darkness, he made the sign of Oom.

Over infinite distances did the arm traverse. Eternity came and fled ere the sign had been completed.

Then at last to the cosmos came perfect peace, and a wandering wind of nothingness blew wistfully over the spot where Oom had been.

The British Reaction...

by

Capt. K. F. Slater

This article cannot be taken as a necessarily true picture of the position. I can only report from my own knowledge-and I have knowledge of the reactions of the fans who do not have subscriptions to the magazines.

However, they are quite a sizeable section of Britain's fan population, and I think I can claim that I am in contact, one way or another, with most of them. I sell 'em mags, I help them to obtain subs, and I do my best to tell them what is new or 'news'.

The most remarkable climb in popularity is that of the new Galaxy Science Fiction. Even before I had received a copy myself requests were coming in to me for the first issue. I have so far (February) filled some fifty requests, and have about twenty outstanding for the October issue. In almost every case the folk who have received one copy have placed a 'firm' order for the subsequent issues, with the result that at the moment I have outstanding orders for some dozen each of the November and December issues. In a number of cases fans who normally are content to sit back and take what they can get have gone to the extreme trouble (and it is REAL hard work) of placing a subscription. The Galaxy Novels have an almost equal popularity, and these two between them now have a greater demand than has Astounding Science Fiction.

This latter magazine is reprinted, minus serials, and only alternate issues, in Britain, but even so has always held the lead in demand....now it would appear that the star of Street & Smith is setting.

Magazines only a short way behind in popularity are Startling and Wonder. They perhaps have some slight advantages in that in '46 they were on sale in British bookshops, import regulations at that time permitted the Canadian edition to be sent over in bulk. So the general public know of them, as distinct from the fan population. And recently a few irregular British reprints have appeared.

Of the other newer magazines, Other Worlds is perhaps the most popular. My 'standing orders' for that only number ten, however, so you see that it is way behind Galaxy. Imagination commands but five regular buyers, and Future only four!

Fantastic Story Quarterly (now Fantastic Story Magazine -5d) and Two Complete Science Adventures are hard to assess. The issue of FSQ containing "Exile of the Skies" was in greater demand than any of the others -the old-timers who can remember the stories are 'selective'. Again, with 2C S-A Books, I have not yet managed to complete demands for the first issue -but the second has nowhere as much attraction. That, perhaps, because most people over in Britain had missed the Hubbard story in the first issue, whereas most of them had read Hamilton's "The Star Kings" in one form or another, and are expecting that Clarke's tale will appear in one of the British magazines in due course of time.

Out of This World Adventures flopped badly in the British fan's estimation. You must remember that most Britons look askance at a 'comic', and the dozen pages interleaved into the centre of the book were 'objectionable'. Apart from that, no one was particularly impressed with the quality of the work in the mag, anyway.

Worlds Beyond and Fantasy Stories did not attract much attention. The latter did not deserve any, of course, as I think most USA fans will agree, but Worlds Beyond, after a rather poor first issue, showed considerable improvement, and I would have expected greater interest in this particular magazine.

The revived Marvel was welcomed with enthusiasm...until the reader waded thru the morass of verbiage that composed the first issue! Of the thirty-four fans who obtained the first issue from me, only three have requested me to get them the second issue. It is to be hoped that with the promised 'clean-up' of this magazine, these folk will give it another try. But I am sure that the long tale by Burks was a mistake -it certainly did not attract the British public, and I do not think many American fans could have been very enthusiastic about it.

We have a steady market for FN and FFM (Fantastic Novels has folded -Ed), and most of the folk who read those two mags were sorry to see the Merritt Fantasy fold. However, there can never be more than a limited market for the uncertain quality of tale used by Miss Gnaedinger. 'Quality' refers to science-fantasy content, and not to writing ability, by the by.

The neat little production titled with that mouthful name of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction has a steady following, and quite a few fans have managed to place subs for it, I believe. I am sure that with the introduction of longer tales it will get a larger public over here.

That gives a picture, more or less, of the reaction to the individual magazines. To sum up, Galaxy has received a phenomenal welcome, but for the rest I think most of the fans in Britain would not be worried if they all folded tomorrow. One or two folks would wail over the loss of their particular favorite, naturally, but I am trying to estimate the bulk reaction. Sorrow might be felt if Ray Palmer ceased to publish...but not so much because of the magazine itself, as for Ray's own loss. Folks here still think harshly (or vice-versa) over the Shaver business, but they quite like Ray and his editorials. No one could care less about the other newer mags!

Continued from page 6

At present Gold is living in an apartment in Stuyvesant Town, on East Fourteenth Street, Manhattan, with his wife Evelyn, and nine-year-old son Eugene. A gorgeous brunette, Evelyn was a dancer when she first met Gold in 1937, and when they married two years later she was appearing as the only American rumba artist in

the World's Fair Cuban Village. Gold is firmly convinced she is the most beautiful wife of any man in science-fiction with the possible exception of C. L. Moore, the wife of Henry Kuttner.

I've never met Mrs. Kuttner, but I have met Mrs. Gold and I suspect that Gold isn't far from wrong.

BILL HAMLING'S

IMAGINATION

by

Charles Recour



What's the best title in the science-fiction field? What's the most up and coming science-fiction magazine today? What are the prospects of science-fiction in these uncertain times? I found some of the answers to these questions----and perhaps they are the correct ones--when I visited William L. Hamling and his Greenleaf Publishing Company the other day.

The Greenleaf Publishing Company is a modest establishment situated in the knotty-pine office basement of Bill's Evanston home. It is a quite comfortable surrounding, with desks, filing cabinets, book shelves, and office machinery ensconced at one end of the forty foot room, with television and a handsome ten foot bar close at hand, giving an overall effect of leisurely business activity. (We should all work as comfortably!)

Bill's answer to the first question was easy. He said, "Imagination, of course." He was speaking of his own publication now featuring its fifth issue on the newsstands. His answer to the second question was equally emphatic and given with a smile. "I've already answered that. Imagination."

The third question brought a frown to his face as he mulled over it for a moment. Then he said quite sincerely, "Frankly, Chuck, I don't really know. Out-

wardly the true devotee of science-fiction expects the biggest boom the genre has ever known. Recent popularity of science-fiction in the big slicks, books, and movies, has tended to indicate a new and potentially great audience hitherto untapped. And the technological developments during this past decade have certainly made the country science-fiction conscious. But wars do peculiar things to people. And certainly we are in one right now---hot or cold---and nobody can say what the outcome will be as far as science-fiction is concerned."

This cogent and realistic analysis came from one of the top editors in the field. Bill Hamling, despite his youthful appearance (he'll be 30 this coming June), has already made a fine reputation for himself in the publishing world.

He started his career back in 1939, selling his first story to Amazing Stories, while a senior in High School. During that period he had been an active fan, and

like most fans, aspired to follow writing as a profession. The war interrupted his efforts (he served his hitch in the Infantry, rising to the rank of Lieutenant) but he returned to writing after his release from the Army. From 1944 to 1946 he established his markets, selling well over a million words to the science-fantasy, western, and detective fields. Then in 1946 he joined the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company and the staff of Amazing Stories and Fantastic Adventures, rising from assistant to associate, and finally managing editor of the entire string of magazines (which also included Mammoth Western, Mammoth Detective, Air Adventures, Mammoth Mystery, and Mammoth Adventure).

Last Fall Bill had to make a big decision. Ziff-Davis was moving its editorial operations from Chicago to New York. He could go along, of course. But that meant not only moving his family, but leaving his friends and essentially starting anew in a city he did not prefer to live in.

As it turned out his decision was an easy one. He purchased Imagination from Ray Palmer after resigning from Z-D, and formed his own company. Thus, the Greenleaf imprint was born.

Its future? Bill is throwing all of his talents and energies into the enterprise, and judging from his past performance as a top editor at Ziff-Davis, it will not be at all surprising to see Imagination to be the first of a growing string of successful magazines.

As to Imagination itself, Bill has already inaugurated some changes. Effective with the June issue (out May 1st) he has adopted a new logo (title) design. Too, he is changing from pulp paper to a hard-finish opaque newsprint which will not only give a finer reproduction job but a more slick appearance to his publication. As Bill puts it: "I may be sacrificing quantity (from the stand-

point of bulk) in appearance, but I'll gain quality."

As for the stories Imagination will feature, Bill has this to say: "It would be presumptuous for me to say that Imagination's stories will be nothing but the cream of the crop. Any successful editor knows that opinion is always divided on the merits of any given story. Let's say that I'll give my readers the best fiction obtainable in all categories--science-fiction, fantasy, science-fantasy---and hope they are received as kindly now as they have been in the magazines I edited in the past."

More positive evidence of what Bill Hamling has to say was emphasized as I looked over tentative lineups of coming issues, including stories by such wellknown names as: Ray Bradbury, Richard Matheson, Geoff St. Reynard, Eric Frank Russell, Robert Bloch, L. Sprague de Camp, Mack Reynolds, Charles F. Myers, Kris Neville, Margaret St. Clair, and many others.

Imagination is still a new name in the science-fiction field. But its owner-editor is a seasoned and well-liked veteran in the trade. He knows what he is doing and his one goal is to put Imagination and the Greenleaf imprint, on the top of the pile. That may be a tall order, but the proof is in the pudding. And I have a hunch that Mr. Greenleaf is a pretty good chef....



ROBERT BLOCH'S

Immodest Proposal

If we heed the warnings of the prophets, modern man is at present occupying an uneasy seat upon the horns of a dilemma, and is in great danger of (to coin a phrase) a double goosing.

The first horn is labelled vanishing natural resources, and its point is that shortly mankind will be faced (or, to carry out our figure of speech, reared) with a lack of sufficient raw materials to support present economies throughout the world. The inevitabilities are all too apparent.

The second horn is called increasing population, and once again we are faced with a seemingly inevitable and inflexible situation, despite the heroic measures promulgated by warmongers and the international rubber cartels.

There is no need to cite chapter and book to support the dual contention of the scientific prophets who foresee a day when even present marginal living standards throughout the world will crumble in the face of lack of natural resources. Similarly, there is little point in questioning vital statistics regarding the birth-rate.

We must accept the bitter truth --- if the inhabitants of earth continue in their ways, the day of reckoning is at hand, and perhaps even in our lifetime we shall all face the day when universal poverty and starvation is our common lot (even as the late Republican party predicted).

But defeatism, negativistic thinking, pessimism will get us nowhere. Now is the time for realistic solutions.

Universal rationing of natural resources is not a solution. Such a step is obviously impossible under a free economy or a dictatorship; basic minimum expenditures are unavoidable. And as living standards are raised everywhere, the waste of raw materials can be expected to increase through mathematical progressions. Meanwhile our fields, forests, mountains, and valleys are laid bare.

A crisis exists. At this very moment, all over the earth, millions of babies are being weaned. Millions of embryos kick and squirm, and even as these lines are written, millions of impregnations are occurring. By the time this message appears in print, more millions will occur. Let the thinking reader merely attempt to calculate the number of impregnations made in the very short space of time between this article's creation and its appearance and this alone should give him pause.

What is the realistic solution?

We have seen that we cannot halt "progress" whether it appears in the guise of expending natural resources or seminal fluid. The supply of the former seems to be dwindling, whilst the supply of the latter seems inexhaustible, and bound to increase because of the increasing birth of boy babies.

We are soon to find a dramatic illustration of our dilemma -- an illustration literally brought home to us -- when we exhaust our food supply.

The words of the Bible, "Man

cannot live by bread alone" will be all too explicit when man discovers that there is no longer any bread.

And yet, perhaps in this very phrase lies the key to our salvation; the realistic solution we have been searching for. The Bible is indeed the repository of all wisdom, and a return to the old-time religion is our only hope.

For ours must be a truly Christian solution. We cannot take inhuman steps; abandon medical progress or modern sanitation methods, in order to increase mortality through plague or famine. We cannot go back to the Dark Ages and keep 90 percent of the population in serfdom or bondage. There must be equal abundance for all. How will this be achieved in the face of less food and more mouths?

"Man cannot live by bread alone."

What solution is implicit in this statement?

The unthinking will immediately turn to vitamins and synthetics; unaware that modern science has confessed itself baffled by the problem of actual creation, and that synthetic food as such went out with Henry Wallace.

But the thinking man will anticipate our solution; the only logical, reasonable, practical solution.

Viz: anthropophagism.

In an effort to consider the physical and psychological problems in modern society, anthropologists and ethnologists have shown an increasing tendency to turn to a study of primitive societies -- their manners, mores, customs, folkways. Many valuable contributions to present day thought have been made as a result of these surveys. Yet for some strange reasons all investigators have chosen to wilfully ignore the implications of the widespread prevalence of cannibalism throughout primitive cultures. Not ritual cannibalism,

but practical cannibalism. Yet the evidence is there -- whenever a savage tribe is faced with a food shortage or famine, cannibalism is the solution and the salvation.

Historians search the past for precedent and precept; they too have made contributions to modern knowledge and yet they too have ignored cannibalism -- if only by dint of superhuman obliquity. For it is not necessary to turn back the clock three thousand years or even three hundred in an effort to find examples. In Germany, during the 1920's, certain butcher-shops had meat. In open boats, during the war years of the 1940's, some castaways waxed sleek and fat.

The pious died. The practical survived.

Are we today (all of us in the same open boat) determined to be pious or practical?

We can be both. The followers of the church of Rome, through the daily miracle of transubstantiation, partake of the "body of our Lord" daily. Would they refuse the offering without transubstantiation? And, logically, if offered a choice between the actual "Body of our Lord" and just a plain body, would they not spare the former out of religious fervor and willingly partake of the latter?

Perhaps some will object on the grounds that this is merely Jesuitical thinking -- that we are positing a hypothetical necessity.

But the problem we face is not hypothetical, but actual; we must deal with actual solutions.

We must find a new way of life in order to survive. And cannibalism is that way of life.

The best way to conserve consumption of natural resources is to consume the consumer.

There is "food for thought!"

In one brilliant stroke, we cut down on the number of mouths to feed and at the same time provide food. We curtail the number

of human units that are at present draining us of all natural resources and at the same time provide a new natural resource hitherto virtually unexploited.

Let Science come to our aid, as it has come to the aid of Messrs. Armour, Swift and Cudahy. They boast that in their stockyard operations they utilize not only the meat but the byproducts. "We use all of the pig but his grunt!" is their boast.

There is no reason for us to do less.

Jonathan Swift's A Modest Proposal pointed the way ---- not only did he suggest that the starving babies of Ireland be made a part of normal cuisine, but also that fine gloves could be found in the skins.

This present proposal is, of course, only an outgrowth of Swift's; but we must realize that we are not dealing with satire here but with the realistic approach.

And for the sake of realism, let us for once and for all consider the practical working aspects of cannibalism. Let us devise a suitable modus operandi.

Naturally, there are strong tabus, to be overcome. We have already considered one; the religious tabu, together with a partial solution based upon theological or metaphysical psychology.

Now let us recognize, boldly, the fact that the majority of us today object to cannibalism upon esthetic grounds.

There are ways and means of overcoming these objections; the easiest and most obvious is to employ the semantic approach. We have esthetic blocs which prevent us from enjoying a dish of lamb testicles, intestines, etc., -- but no objection to dining on lamb-fries, sweetbreads, or tripe. Surely the great industrial and advertising minds which have given us "SPAM" and "TRETT" can coin suitable neologisms when the time arrives.

But we anticipate. Long before

we reach the stage of "packaging a product", we can overcome initial resistance and break down prejudice by proceeding along purely logical paths.

To begin with, we must introduce cannibalism on a small scale, for strictly practical purposes. Instead of penning up habitual criminals for life at great expense to the taxpayer, let us first consider them in terms of calories; of food value. The death-sentence, when rendered, should not be merely a prelude to a useless and expensive funeral. Once this attitude is established, we can then proceed to a consideration of "natural deaths" -- and incidentally, point out to the principal objectors, viz, the morticians, that a few simple lessons will transform them into packers and/or chefs without lessening their source of revenue.

Public relations, as we can readily see from this one simple example, will be of inestimable aid in this changeover.

We can next proceed to stamp out both the abortion racket and the stigma of illegitimacy by means too obvious to mention -- and as our jails empty so will our orphan asylums. For that matter, our insane asylums will soon be a thing of the past, and perhaps our psychiatrists too in time will turn to cookery and study Brillat-Savarin instead of Kraft-Ebbing.

Another oblique approach to breaking down "consumer-resistance" lies in our present program of aid to Europe. The starving are notoriously lacking in fastidiousness; we can substitute ingredients in present CARE packages or our regular shipments abroad. As a matter of fact, we need not even substitute -- merely by eliminating such shipments entirely we will soon bring about the desired effect and automatically give half the world a tolerance, and gradually a conditioning to cannibalism which will help establish it as a way of life.

After all, it's nothing but setting up a habit pattern. In a world where "Dog eat dog" is an accepted business precept; where economic practices are already taken for granted when they cause the deaths of millions, we can hope for still further advances. The course of least resistance will be taken in Europe and in our own America. As meat prices continue to rise, we will find millions turning to some new and ambiguously-labelled packaged meat product which sells for half and contains just as much wholesome nourishment.

By the time criminals, orphans, the insane and handicapped are eliminated, we will find ourselves in the enviable position of having already created a flourishing market and a growing "acceptance" of the new food.

Then subtly, slowly, public relations and business will work with orthodox science to "institutionalize" the practice of cannibalism. Once it becomes fashionable, and "smart", the general public will eagerly embrace the practice of anthropophagism. Pictures of society leaders and movie stars "dining out"...new "diets" in the women's magazines...learned articles in the "business papers"....."educational" films....radio "jingles"...all the resources of modern mass-psychological techniques can be brought to bear upon the problem of promoting popularity for the new food.

Home economists will bear out the fact that this is not a day-dream; potatoes, tomatoes, bananas and other staple articles of diet were once abhorred and regarded with suspicion by the populace --- but an educational program won the day.

Our course of life will be

changed, naturally. Wars will be fought to take prisoners, not to maim or destroy; this means our civilization will be saved from wholesale destruction and gradually our combative instinct will perish and peace will reign. No longer will there be a "criminal" problem or an "unwanted child" problem or an "insanity" problem. The undesirables will vanish from the earth. Tax-free institutions will go, thus adding to general prosperity. We will find ourselves living in a world of kindly, healthy, tolerant, forward-looking, decent human beings--bright, optimistic, carnivorous.

It won't be done in a day, or in a year. But the time is coming and coming fast. Even today, in the universal medium, the "comic strip", Mr. Al Capp has unwittingly created a symbol of the shape of things to come - the self-sustaining food product, the "schmoo." As soon as people realize the "schmoo" is merely a symbol of the human being, the way to salvation will be clear.

A final word to the timid and finicky -- if you have any doubts as to the taste of human flesh, be reassured. In the words of those who know through actual experience, human flesh resembles delicious pork or veal. The flesh of tobacco smokers is a bit gamy, but if cigarettes must go, that is in itself a valuable contribution to the health of the race. It is said that when "hung" or aged flesh has a slightly fishy savor; the comparison is generally made with reference to a salted fish.

To paraphrase the words of the Bible once again, it may not be too long before we are all asking ourselves the ancient question -- "Am I my brother's kipper?"



(This article is anonymous for several reasons, the most important of which is the fact that we write stories for the pulps and some of our remarks may not be looked upon too kindly by some editors and publishers. The figures we quote are taken from the N. W. Ayer & Sons Newspaper Directory, available at your local library. The dates listed for the circulation figures are the dates of the directory from which they are quoted; the figures probably refer to the magazine circulation during the previous year. That is, the figures listed for 1930 probably refer to some period during 1929. This may make for some confusion but since we didn't know the exact period the circulation figures referred to, we thought it best that we merely mention in this preface that the years referred to are the directory years. The figures for 6/30/50 are from the February '51 Consumer magazine section of Standard Rate and Data. We would like to have used SR&D as our sole reference, but had difficulty finding back copies; libraries apparently don't keep them.)

decline of the **THE PULPS**

THE PULPS ARE in trouble, serious trouble. The roller-coaster pulpwood field where fortunes have been made and lost practically overnight is in the midst of a drastic circulation slump that would make that of the depression look like a seasonal variation. Not so long ago, it looked like the sky might be the limit for pulp circulations. Popular Publications was even taking full page newspaper ads extolling the virtues of "The people who live on Popular street" in a drive for mass market advertising, and they had over three million circulation to offer potential advertisers.

But that was back in 1946 or so. That dull thud you're hearing today is the bottom dropping out. A period of five years has seen the collapse of the one-time giant of them all, Street & Smith, and a recent issue of Standard Rate & Data lists Ace as discontinuing the last two magazines in its line with the April issues. Both Popular and Thrilling have suffered circulation drops of over 40 percent since the lush days just after the war and other houses have suffered to somewhat the same degree. If you're going to understand just what happened to the pulps, though, it might be wise to give you some historical background first.

The pulps, as such, have been with us for quite some time. Blue Book was started many years ago in 1905, Adventure was established back in 1911, and Short Stories was doing business back in '23 and had probably been established many years previous to that. Thrilling and Popular, the two largest chains currently, weren't established until the thirties.

Back in the twenties---as far back as we went in digging up circulation figures for this article---the circulation of the pulps was exceedingly good. Blue Book was selling over 200,000 copies an issue; Adventure and Short Stories had no difficulty peddling 150,000, and Argosy was selling close to half a million. Triple X and Ace High, which came on the scene somewhat later, had no difficulty selling a hundred thousand copies and even Amazing, pioneering an utterly new field, sold over a hundred thousand. At this time, the magazines were of unusually high quality, paid their authors relatively well, and featured many authors who have since graduated to "big name" classification in the slicks.

The first of the big names, Street & Smith, was doing business in the early twenties with a circulation of over a million copies and they were joined later on in the twenties by Clayton and Fiction House. Munsey also added a few titles to keep Argosy company. The chains prospered and most of the individual pulps did quite well until the days of the big depression. In the early thirties, some companies went broke and many a pulp title died while in the printing forms.

	Blue Book	Adventure	Amazing	Fiction H.	Street & Smith
1931	175,000	113,000	100,000	813,000	1,147,000
1933	102,000	81,000	40,600	300,000 (est)	943,000

It's to be noted, incidentally, that Munsey seemed to be an exception. The Munsey chain was selling more copies in 1933 than '31; however, the figures are masked to some extent as they do not tell how many titles are included in each figure.

The middle thirties saw the launching of pulp chains as we know them now. This is no diatribe against any particular publisher but it's to be pointed out that the chains launched in the thirties were quite different from the high quality pulps that had dominated the field until then. Gang Busters, G-Man Stories, Terror Tales, and Horror Stories---aided by particularly lurid covers---sold fabulously well. Ace, Goodman, and Double Action came on the scene in the late thirties.

All chains, incidentally, are founded on the same general idea. Like sunspots, there are cycles in the pulp industry. One year, westerns will sell like mad, the next year detectives will be hot. The idea is to have enough strings in your bow so you can appeal to any particular branch that might suddenly zoom to popularity. Hence titles in the love, western, detective, sport, air-war, adventure, and science-fiction fields. Right now, of course, science-fiction is popular and the number of titles released by each chain has increased. Unfortunately for the chains, science-fiction is not, and probably never will be, popular enough to serve as the base for a pulp company, as western titles and detective titles have in the past.

By the end of the thirties all of the once enormously popular general fiction titles had folded or were minor cogs in big chains. Adventure had been bought by the Popular chain, and Argosy was coughing its last. Triple-X, Top-Notch, Complete Stories, and the rest of the old stand-bys had gone. Two lone exceptions were Short Stories and Blue Book, and Blue Book was to have its troubles. In 1942 the Munsey chain was sold to Popular; six years later Street & Smith's pulp section folded. Now might be a good time to show how suddenly a pulp house can go under.

Munsey Publications

1933	529,000
1934	441,000
1935	410,000
1936	376,000
1937	323,000
1938	306,000
1939	344,000
1940	310,000
1941	322,000
1942	245,000

Street & Smith Publications

1943	1,638,172
1944	1,377,000
1945	1,061,000
1946	1,013,000
1947	745,000
1948	302,000
1949	274,000

The reasons for Munsey's fall could be the subject for another long article; offhand we don't know. We do know, and would like to make a point of it, that toward the end Munsey tried to recoup to a certain extent by issuing reprint titles. It did them no good. The Street & Smith fall, particularly irking to us since we have always had the opinion that it could have been avoided, had all the earmarks of being pushed from behind. Street & Smith's interest in the forties was primarily in their slick magazines for the very good reason that there was more money in them. The pulps were sort of an orphan child that wasn't wanted by its foster parents. At any rate, when the pulps went small size some junior size genius in the firm thought they should be ultra-sophisticated as well. There followed a rash of modernistic covers and an attempt to modernize the story line of Doc Savage and The Shadow by the injection of, by then, the standard pulp "love interest". The love interest formula probably wasn't fatal but the modernistic covers were. Exit Street & Smith. The sole title saved from the axe was Astounding, a title that had sold moderately well before and during the war and afterwards showed a consistent climb. Rumor has it that Astounding peddles a quite respectable 110,000 copies a month. To Street & Smith's credit goes the fact that their pulps died a clean death. They didn't resort to either reprints or dropping of author rates. They died with their boots on, pardner. We'll now observe a short silence for S & S.

Apparently Street & Smith was the handwriting on the wall. From 1947 on, pulp circulations have plummeted. The only possible exceptions are the circulations of the science-fiction magazines. And even in these, the Ziff-Davis chain has dropped quite a bit. We hasten to add that this drop was probably due more to the wearing off of the Shaver mystery than to a basic lack of interest in Amazing and Fantastic Adventures. Reliable sources have it that Amazing still sells a respectable 120,000 copies or so. The circulation of the newcomer Galaxy is still a mystery to all outsiders, and two specific rumors have placed it at both 70,000 and 135,000 copies. Certainly a wide latitude of choice! Below, you'll find the circulation figures and percentages of decline for Thrilling and Popular. You'll also find figures for Ziff-Davis, showing the pulling power of the Shaver mystery and its subsequent decline.

	Popular	Thrilling	Ziff-Davis
1947	3,242,000	2,385,000	241,000
1948	2,583,000 - 20.4%	2,252,000 - 5.6%	385,000 plus 60%
1949	2,568,000 - .6%	2,144,000 - 4.8%	366,000 - 4.9%
1950	2,167,000 -15.5%	1,768,000 - 17.5%	299,000 - 18.2%
6/30/50	1,766,000 - 18.0%	1,375,000 - 22.3%	236,000 - 21.1%

Total percentage decline between 1947 and June 30, 1950.

Popular: 45% Thrilling: 42% Ziff-Davis: 38%

Well, there you have it. The great pulp famine is on. Whether or not the pulps will do a complete fade-out remains to be seen. Perhaps they'll recover from this as they have from various other crises. We tend to think that unless something is done, the pulp situation will grow worse rather than better.

Everything from the comics to TV to pocket books has been cited as the criminal that rabbit-punched the pulps. Perhaps they all helped. We might also point out the possibility that in recent years the taste of the American public might have risen some. With as many entertainment mediums as there are today, it is becoming increasingly obvious that no matter what your medium, if you want to attract the cash customers, you're going to have to have a good attraction. Any movie mogul could tell the pulp publishers that.

All in all, with the exception of the pulps, the publishing field has never been as healthy. The public obviously hasn't stopped reading. Fiction is still a primary ingredient in Collier's and the Post and the slick Argosy. Blue Book, by far the best of the pulp papers with a superior format and layout (compare BB's interior layout with any other pulp on the market, if you want to know what I mean), sells over 250,000 copies an issue. Both Astounding and Galaxy, among the science-fiction magazines, enjoy large circulations and curiously enough feature good art and make-up and what's more important, adult fiction.

You get the point. It isn't the people, it's the pulp magazines themselves. For one thing, their format and layout is old-fashioned. Automobiles have gone streamlined, tomatoes come wrapped in cellophane, and slick magazines in the last decade have become the latest word in modern layout and design. In contrast, the format of the pulps hasn't changed in the last thirty years. They're still gaudy, they still shed little bits of paper all over you, their artwork and layout is not only crude but juvenile, and to be frank their style of fiction should have gone out with the tin foil on Hershey bars.

The sole salvation of the pulps now lies in attracting the more mature, adult reader. The kiddie market was cornered by the comics long ago. Apparently, some of the brighter publishers realize this. In the science-fiction field in particular, the word has gone out for adult material. The space-opera, juvenile brand of tripe is supposedly banished. And quoting from the December '50 issue of Writer's Digest, from the column "New York Market Letter": "The Thrilling Group is meeting the challenge by jacking the magazines up to date... The stories, long considered old-fashioned by writers, are now to have real emotional punch and dramatic impact..." The Goodman chain is also anxious to obtain adult, well-written material and is willing to pay higher rates to get it. In contrast to other pulp chains, Goodman is refusing to use reprints. (Orchids to Martin Goodman). However, and this is an aside to the Goodman chain, for pete's sake hire somebody new in the art department! Better fiction should be better packaged, and we don't mean like the new Marvel, a horrible example of good intentions and little know-how. Popular has revised the format of some of their pulps considerably, but took a step backward in using reprints

heavily and in cutting all interior illustrations. Columbia Publications, never noted for their original thinking in handling their pulps, has decided that an all-out economy slash is in the books. They're using reprints and have also (I understand) cut their word rates to $\frac{1}{2}\%$ a word; considering living costs today, this latter figure is an insult.

A passing word on the type of fiction used. The chains in the early thirties introduced the highly profitable formula of slam-bang action and "shock" writing to replace plot complication and the old time "element of mystery" that used to be the stock-in-trade of all adventure and pulp writing. Very little writing was done along the somewhat Sax Rohmerish lines of the Peter the Brazen stories, the Theodore Roscoe foreign legion stories, and some of Harry Stephen Keeler's webwork stories. Methinks the time has come to return to the fold of good, plotty stories. One more thing that became formula and, as far as we're concerned, only gummed up the works, is the hundred and one girl Fridays who have plagued every pulp hero from Doc Savage to Captain Future. Practically any pulp devotee will tell you that things would have been better off if the girls had remained in their place, practically unseen and definitely unheard, unless they could serve a more useful purpose than to be rescued every time the author got stuck with his story. And those distaff devotees of the pulps that have made our acquaintance agree with us one hundred percent. We don't know the psychology but having heroines clutter up the story does not attract women to the pulp magazines.

We like the pulps; we always have. We think that well-written, well-packaged all-fiction magazines will sell. The point we wish to make is the same one the movie moguls stumbled on when they went through their recent box-office crisis. If you want to attract customers, you have to have a good production. This holds for the movies, for fights that want to draw a good gate, and even for magazines. And if you've got a good production, you don't need to worry about television.

Up to date, modern all-fiction magazines will sell. But the same old pulp product isn't going to. The sensational and gaudy pulp of the thirties is on its way to join the dodo, the five cent cigar, and the dollar dollar. (No typographical error).

And we don't think it's going to be missed.

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"DOUBLEGOOD" report from AIR STRIP 1

by Ted Carnell

ALTHOUGH THE past eight North American science-fiction Conventions have been called "World" conclaves, to Britain has gone the initial honour of holding the first truly International gathering of professionals and fans. Geographical location made it an easier project for the London committee responsible for the highly successful two-day meeting held in the muralled ballroom of the Royal Hotel over the weekend of May 12th-13th, and first-hand information collected by myself at Cincinnati in 1949 enabled us to model the entire Convention along similar lines to those previously held in USA.

The difference being that over 200 delegates from eight countries were able to compare notes and discuss the varying difficulties of their respective countries and make suggestions for each other's mutual advantage. These evaluations reached a climax during the special international session which ran for two and a half hours on Sunday, May 13th, the main theme of which was international fandom. Lyell Crane, Canadian delegate, outlined the plans of Science Fiction International, and proposed that an HQ should be established outside the two major fan countries of the USA and UK for the dissemination and correlation of news to scattered groups and isolated individuals throughout the world.

Forrest J Ackerman, United States delegate, followed with a highly interesting and entertaining talk on how fandom in the States was coming more and more into its own, and how the executives of radio, TV, films, and publishing houses were turning more and more to fandom for their specialised knowledge in the field. George Gallet, from Paris, editor and journalist, whose name has been known for some 17 years to fandom, next spoke on the increasing interest in France and how he hopes to be publishing at least eight pocketbook novels a year by 1952.

Already published in France by him have been Murder of the USA and Hamilton's The Star Kings. These are being followed by The Demi-Gods, Vandals of the Void, and Stowaway to Mars. Gallet stated that the French-reading public prefers the simpler action-packed story to the currently American sociological and psychological story.

Holland was the next country represented, and Ben Abas, a commercial artist from Haarlam, revealed to the assembly that he and his father were responsible for the publishing of a science-fiction magazine in Holland which ran to four issues before they had to cease publication two years ago. He agreed with Gallet of France that un-



Award presentation: L to r. Ben Abas (Holland); Sigvard Ostlund (Sweden); Ackerman receiving award from G. Ken Chapman; Lyell Crane (Canada); Wendy Ackerman; John Carnell (standing).



Celeb photo: Back row, standing: 1 to r. Les Johnson; Walter Gillings; Ackerman (USA); Chambaz and George Gallet (France); Arthur Clarke; Ken Paynter (Australia); Lee Jacobs (USA); John Beynon (John Wyndham pseudonym); William F. Temple; Ben Abas (Holland); Michael Rosenblum; Fred Brown (Londoner); John Carnell. Front row, seated: Mdm. Chambaz; Wendy Ackerman; Mdm. Gallet; Mdm. Abas.

less one could read English-written magazines there was little chance of the field growing until some enterprising publisher produced translations of the better type of stories.

Sigvard Ostlund, representing Sweden, startled the assembly by informing them that a weekly science-fiction magazine had been running in Stockholm for some time, but that the publisher very often mixed detective and western fiction in the issues. Northern Ireland was represented by foremost fan Walter Willis, an enthusiastic amateur publisher from Belfast, who outlined the activities of his own group (four of whom were at the Convention), and mentioned the first science-fiction novel to be written entirely in Gaelic.

Ken Paynter, recently from Sydney, Australia, was one of two "down under" delegates, and gave a humorous as well as an accurate account of the troubles and trials of Australian fans during the past few years. Ken was originally treasurer of the still-operating Sydney Futurians. His countryman, Alan Shalders, who did not speak during the discussion, is a rocket expert from Woomera on a two-year reciprocal exchange with the British rocket propulsion department.

Wendayne Ackerman, USA, then gave a summary of early and recent Germanic excursions into the fantasy field, and was followed by Frank Arnold, representing Britain, who covered the rest of the European continent with a fascinating and highly entertaining eulogy, proving that science-fiction truly sprang from international sources. Lee Jacobs, another US delegate, who was stationed at Versailles, France, in the Signal Corp, had flown over specially for the Convention (he was at Portland last year, too), and gave a fine account of the number of technical men he knew who were active in fandom.

Some highly interesting subjects were bandied about by the gathering at the general discussion which followed, all of which was wire-recorded for posterity!

However, the piece-de-resistance of the entire Convention followed immediately after the international session. Unheralded and unannounced up to Convention time, and known only to a limited few, the 1951 International Fantasy Award was sprung upon an enthusiastic audience, who thundered applause and agreement at the decision of the London Circle to devise and present the equivalent of an "Oscar" to the author of the adjudged best fiction book of 1950 and one to the best technical book in the field.

A panel of critics had been instituted two weeks prior to the Convention, and from their deliberations George R. Stewart was adjudged the fiction winner for his *EARTH ABIDES*, and Chesley Bonestell and Willy Ley took the non-fiction award for their joint *CONQUEST OF SPACE*.

The two awards, which it is hoped will be yearly, comprise a 12" spaceship resting its fins upon a mahogany base, with a beautiful global lighter attached. The fiction award will be in heavy Chromium plate, and the non-fiction award in a bronzed metal. The design was taken from the Bonestell cover on the March 1951 *Galaxy*, and it is hoped that the actual awards will be ready by the end of June for Forrie Ackerman to take back to USA with him and present to the winners.

Although the actual design has now passed the drawing board stage, it was impossible to have the awards ready for the Convention, so a beautiful replica was made, and this was presented at an inaugural ceremony

presided over by G. Ken Chapman, to Forrie Ackerman who accepted the awards on behalf of his fellow countrymen.

The International Fantasy Award Fund has now been thrown open to anyone who wishes to donate contributions at any time during each year - it being intended that other branches of fantasy shall be admitted to the yearly "Oscar". The London Circle have appointed Mr. Leslie Flood as their Treasurer, who states that the Fund will be a non-profit making affair, and that, for the time being he is using the editorial address of New Worlds (Nova Publications Ltd., 25 Stoke Newington Road, London, N.16).

A special letter has been designed, and the Committee of the Award Fund anticipate that by next year a number of prominent publishers will be contributing to the scheme, as well as organisations and other bodies prominent in science-fiction.

It will be noted that both award winners have had their books published in both Britain and USA, but all fantasy books from any countries will be eligible each year for entry in the award. Subscribers to the Fund will automatically be placed upon the adjudicating panel.

Other highlights of the Convention were two successful auctions; the "rendering" of Milton Rothman's two soap operas, Life Can Be Horrible and Who Goes Where?, scripts of which were sent by air to London, and adapted for European consumption! London Films loaned a projector and a variety of short films were shown, including four which Ackerman had brought over specially. Amongst these was the celebrated cutting-room floor epic of Bob Tucker's, Rocket to the Moon, shown at the first US Convention. Author Clarke showed a beautiful technicolor film on rocket firing, and Conan Doyle's Lost World was resurrected and proved excellent fare, despite the vintage.

Throughout the two days a variety of speakers, mainly professional, had spoken on numerous subjects, from editing to writing, and two lively debates had raged from the auditorium. Unlike American conventions, the London one died a natural death after 11:00 p.m. owing to transportation difficulties, but numerous delegates who were staying in or near the Royal Hotel, held private sessions. The two evenings prior to the Convention saw London's White Horse Tavern packed with over one hundred delegates getting together informally, and on the day following the official Convention a large group of delegates toured London's Festival of Britain site, ending up in the evening at yet another London tavern for the finale. Two days later Londoners staged a farewell party at the White Horse to send off the overseas delegates.

In retrospect, London's International Convention was as successful as any yet staged in North America, although it did not break any attendance records. Despite intense efforts by the Committee, and considerable interest by national press agencies and publishers, no publicity either before or after the Convention materialised. This was mainly owing to the convention being held on a national holiday, and it has been generally agreed that no publicity was better than adverse publicity.

A number of publishing houses interested in fantasy fiction had representatives present. Elaborate displays by both publishers and book dealers, plus panelled walls filled with original work, made colorful splashes against the setting. Author Paul Capon, whose current book, The Other Side of the Sun, is being serialised on the BBC, was present,

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MORE ABOUT "PROGRESS REPORT"

The "article" "Progress Report" was reprinted recently in Chemical and Engineering News, December 25, 1950, under the title "Science Report." About one-third of the original which appeared in Astounding Science Fiction, September, 1949, was left out. Dr. John H. Pomeroy, the author, was highly amused to receive the following communication which prompted an equally entertaining reply, which we are sure our readers will appreciate.

* * *

Dear Dr. Pomeroy:

In reading your Progress Report in the December issue of "Chemical and Engineering News," I noted with interest two items.

Could I get a sample of your volume-active colloid for increasing surface tension of water? I would also appreciate getting a sample of your 5.5L resin for inorganic-organic ion exchange.

Very truly yours,

(deleted)

* * *

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your recent letter which inquired for samples of the volume-active colloid, and of the 5.5L resin for inorganic-organic ion exchange. Unfortunately, I do not currently have samples of these materials available, since as you may note, I am no longer affiliated with the Northeastern Divisional Laboratories. For a number of reasons with which you are no doubt unfamiliar, it is very difficult to make direct contact with these laboratories; I presume that you may have already discovered this situation. I might suggest that you should get in touch with Professor Isaac Asimov, Medical School, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, who may be able to act as your local liaison man. Dr. Algird Kreuchunas, who was formerly associated with these projects, is now working at the Experiment Station of E. I. DuPont de Nemours, in Wilmington, Delaware, and may be able to give you some information.

I am not currently familiar with the situation at the NDL, but understand that a certain reorganization and reallocation of personnel is taking place. The Air Forces Project Saucer has absorbed most of the group formerly located at Salem; another division is working for ECA developing a form of plastic currency to be used in sections of Greece --- the new synthetic for this purpose has been called the Ionic Change Resin. One of the medical groups is currently working on a program to investigate a peculiar

kind of chronic twitch which has broken out among workers with heavy hydrogen, to which has been given the name of deuterium tremens.

If you are not able to get the information you desire on these materials from Professor Asimov or Dr. Kreuchunas, certain journal references may be of interest. I hesitate, however, to give these to you, inasmuch as they may not be readily available to you. See:

Harley and Davidson, "Cyclic Compounds as Negative Surfactants," Proceedings of the Lemurian Academy of Sciences, 79, 315-23 (1951, new style).

J. V. Stalin, "Preparation of Radicals by a Chain Reaction," Journal of Applied Nuclear Science (U. S. S. R.), 4, 123-9 (1950).

I also take pleasure in sending you a copy of the article "Progress Report," in its original form. I am sorry that I have not been able to give you more information at this time, but hope that some of this material may have been helpful. If I may be of service in any way, please do not hesitate to write again.

Very sincerely yours,

John H. Pomeroy

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and author John Keir Cross, who adapted the book for the BBC, gave an interesting talk upon his efforts to induce them to use more science-fiction serials. Author S. Fowler Wright, who was to have spoken, went to the wrong hotel, and subsequently didn't arrive.

The general consensus of opinion was that London should stage a yearly Convention, the city being better adapted for out-of-town delegates to reach than any other in the country. While the Committee at the moment say "Never again!" they will, undoubtedly, as soon as the back aches disappear, start planning for 1952.